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# Iran's Premier Apparently Rules Out Aid on Hostages

By MICHAEL ROSS, Times Staff Writer

NICOSIA, Cyprus—Iranian Prime Minister Hussein Moussavi on Wednesday appeared to rule out any chance that Iran might help free the remaining American hostages in Lebanon, saying there is "no possibility whatsoever" of negotiations between Iran and the United States.

Moussavi's remarks, reported by Tehran radio and monitored here, contradicted the remarks of another Iranian official, who only Tuesday had offered to intercede in the hostage crisis if the United States would release weapons and military supplies purchased by Iran—but never received—before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Diplomats and other analysts in Nicosia linked the conflicting signals coming out of Iran, as well as leaks about a secret U.S.-Iranian deal to free the hostages, to an intense power struggle said to be taking place in Tehran that has made it unclear who speaks for that country.

The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani, who heads one of the factions involved, told a Tehran rally on Tuesday that Iran would work for the release of the American and French hostages being held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon if the United States and France agreed to end their "hostile acts" against Iran.

Rafsanjani made it clear that in Iran's view, these acts include the U.S. freeze on arms shipments to Iran, which is involved in a lengthy war with Iraq, and a dispute with the French over the repayment of a \$1-billion loan extended to France by the government of the late Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

Rafsanjani's remarks, along with several reports published in the Arab world in recent days, indicate that there have been secret contacts between U.S. and Iranian officials aimed at working out a deal to free the hostages in return for the spare parts that Iran wants for its aging U.S. military equipment.

Iran's need for these spare parts is viewed by some analysts as especially urgent in light of its plans to undertake a long-expected, but much-delayed, offensive against Iraq.

But Moussavi, according to Tehran radio, said that any deal with the United States is out of the question. Likening relations between Washington and Tehran to "those of a wolf with a lamb," Moussavi said "there can be no possibility whatsoever of negotiations between us and the United States."

Moussavi's remarks coincided with an announcement by Anglican hostage negotiator Terry Waite that he will not return to Beirut this week as expected but will await further developments.

Waite, the Church of England envoy who has been acting as a go-between in the hostage negotiations for more than a year, hinted at a news conference in Wiesbaden, West Germany, that his efforts to bring about the release of more American hostages had run into difficulties.

Waite accompanied David P. Jacobsen, the American hostage who was freed Sunday, to Wiesbaden from Beirut on Monday and had hoped to return to the Lebanese capital before the end of the week to bring out two more American hostages, journalist Terry A. Anderson, the Beirut bureau chief of the Associate Press, and Thomas Sutherland, dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut. Both men, kidnaped more than 18 months ago, are being held by Islamic Jihad (Islamic Holy War), the pro-Iranian group that released Jacobsen.

Waite told reporters in Wiesbaden that he will not be returning immediately to Beirut but will be "dropping out of public view" for the next few days in the hopes of "resuming contacts with a number of people."

He refused to characterize his change of plans as a setback but conceded that he wishes the outcome "had been different."

Later in the day, in London, he said that "rumors and information spread over the past day have not helped" his effort to bring about the release of the hostages. He said the effort was being hampered by "a lot of people trying to sabotage" the negotiations.

He said the speculation touched off by Jacobsen's release has caused nervousness among his contacts in Lebanon and that it might be "quite some time" before he could get on with his effort on behalf of the other hostages.

The Reagan Administration has refused to comment on the negotiations or Rafsanjani's statement that Robert C. McFarlane, President Reagan's former national security adviser, secretly visited Iran in September.

But it was clear from Waite's remarks and other evidence emerging in the past few days that the United States had hoped to secure the release of at least two other hostages held by Islamic Jihad. The three other Americans held in Lebanon are believed to be in the custody of groups other than Islamic Jihad.

The failure to free more Americans may be in part a reflection of the complex power struggle taking place in Iran between hard-line and relatively moderate factions seeking to position themselves to succeed the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's supreme leader, who is 86 and according to unconfirmed reports is bedridden as the result of a recent heart attack.

The first indication of a secret U.S.-Iranian deal to free the hostages came in a report by a pro-Syrian magazine in Beirut, which quoted sources close to the Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, the leader of one of the Iranian factions, as saying that McFarlane had secretly visited Tehran in September to discuss the release of the hostages in exchange for military supplies.

Analysts who follow Iranian affairs from Nicosia said the

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hard-line Montazeri faction could have leaked word of McFarlane's purported visit in order to embarrass and undermine the Rafsanjani faction, which has been promoting improved relations with Washington. But they also speculated that Syria could have leaked the report because of what appeared to be an Iranian attempt to freeze the Damascus government out of the hostage negotiations.

Rafsanjani, considered a pragmatist, has been pushing for a new military offensive against Iraq in an effort to wind up the seven-year-old Persian Gulf War. But he has been stymied by a lack of weaponry and spare parts, which keep Iran's aging fleet of F-4, F-5 and F-14 fighter planes on the ground, and the country's increasingly bleak economic situation.

Rafsanjani, in statements carried

Tuesday by the Iranian news agency, appeared to be trying to deflect speculation that Iran had already struck a deal with the United States to work for the American hostages' release in return for a promise of military spare parts.

Rafsanjani said McFarlane and four other Americans had come to Tehran disguised as aircraft crewmen and carrying Irish passports. To cultivate the Iranians, he said, they also brought a Bible signed by Reagan and a cake in the shape of a key. He said his government's response was to put them under house arrest in their hotel, refuse to let them see Iranian officials and then expel them after five days.

On Wednesday, the Iranians appeared to back away from that account though there were conflicting reports. Rafsanjani was

quoted as saying the man leading the U.S. delegation "claimed to be McFarlane" but that the Speaker was "unsure if he was the same person."

The radio report of Moussavi's remarks said the former White House aide showed Iranian authorities a passport to prove his identity and that Iran has retained photocopies of the passport. Moussavi did not say which country issued the passport.

Meanwhile, in London, an Iranian diplomat said Iran played no role in Jacobsen's release. Seyed Jalal Sadatian, Iran's charge d'affaires and Iran's top diplomat in London, told the Associated Press that Waite had been in touch with Iran months ago, but Iranian officials had urged him to "pursue the matter (of the U.S. hostages) through a different channel."